

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002946

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE AND IS NOT SUITABLE FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [XF](#) [IZ](#) [ICRC](#)

SUBJECT: PROPOSALS FOR POSSIBLE UNHCR ASHRAF ENGAGEMENT

-----  
ACTION REQUEST  
-----

1. (SBU) Embassy asks the department to request that US Mission Geneva approach UNHCR to determine whether UNHCR will be willing to undertake any of the actions listed in paragraph (2).

-----  
TALKING POINTS  
-----

2. (SBU) MNF-I requests UNHCR assistance in one of the following forms for 192 Iranian nationals living in an MNF-I tent city (the Temporary Interview and Protection Facility, or TIPF) on the outskirts of the former Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MeK) military base at Camp Ashraf who are awaiting refugee status determinations (proposals are listed in descending preference):

(i) that UNHCR representatives set a date to visit Camp Ashraf to conduct refugee status determination interviews with 192 Iranian nationals who have dissociated themselves from the MeK. MNF-I is able to provide secure convoy and helicopter transport to Camp Ashraf from Baghdad International Airport or the Iranian border, as well as accommodations and communications capability;

(ii) that UNHCR representatives set a date on which UNHCR representatives would be willing and able to begin small-group refugee status determination interviews at the Muntheria-Khosravi Iraqi-Iranian border crossing. MNF-I is able to arrange use of indoor facilities at the border, and to transport interviewees round-trip from Camp Ashraf;

(iii) that one or more UNAMI representatives visit Camp Ashraf (MNF-I is able to provide round-trip helicopter transport for a days' visit) to speak with refugee status candidates about UNHCR's willingness to conduct refugee status interviews in future;

(iv) that one or more UNAMI representatives agree to meet with a small representative delegation of refugee status candidates from Camp Ashraf in Baghdad to speak to the same (MNF-I is able to provide round-trip convoy transportation for the Ashraf residents).

-----  
ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS  
-----

3. (SBU) MNF-I is aware that refugee status interviews will not provide a quick fix for these 192 Iranian nationals, and rapid third-country resettlement is unlikely. The 192 interviewees, many of whom have awaited refugee status interviews for two years or more, are likewise aware that refugee status determination will not enable their immediate departure from Camp Ashraf.

4. (SBU) However, there is a growing tension in the TIPF as residents voice their resentment that ICRC-assisted repatriation is successful and ongoing for those willing and able to return to Iran, but that no corresponding arrangement has been made for those fearing for their safety upon repatriation. Several recent unexpected runaways into the desert and isolated occurrences of self-harm attest to the rising stress levels.

5. (SBU) MNF-I believes that an expression on UNHCR's part of willingness to engage on humanitarian grounds would greatly reduce tension in the TIPF, and have a positive effect on morale. MNF-I would also welcome any additional proposals UNHCR may make with the aim of achieving a similar effect.

-----

-----

16. (SBU) Many residents of the TIPF have written lengthy accounts of their POW experiences, kidnapping by the MeK, or persecution inside Iran which they have requested MNF-I pass to UNHCR. If UNHCR does not plan to visit Camp Ashraf or otherwise make contact with MNF-I soon, MNF-I would appreciate guidance on how to handle this correspondence. (TIPF residents have access to APO mail, but are unsure of the correct address for personal letters to UNHCR.)  
Satterfield